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IN THE CLAIMS

*The status of the claims as presently amended is as follows:*

1. (*Currently Amended*) A side member, which is a complement of a pair located on either side of the body of a vehicle so as to and extending in the longitudinal direction thereof the vehicle body, passing and adapted to extend under a dash panel located in the front part of the interior of the vehicle so as to cross the vehicle body, the side member comprising:

a front side member adapted to extending rearwardly, from the front of the vehicle body, beyond a dash plane, which extends along a substantially vertical wall of the dash panel; and

a rear side member adapted to extending forwardly, from the rear of the vehicle body, beyond the dash plane, and having a surface extending in the longitudinal direction of the vehicle and overlapping with and joined to the front side member in an overlapping manner,

wherein the front side member includes an inner member having an upper front wall, a lower front wall, and an inside front wall, and an outer member having an outside front wall,

wherein the inner member and the outer member form a first closed section,

wherein the rear side member includes an upper member having a bottom wall, an inside rear wall, and an outside rear wall,

wherein the upper member is adapted to form a second closed section with the dash panel,

wherein the bottom wall is joined to the lower front wall, the inside rear wall is joined to the inside front wall, and the outside rear wall is joined to the outside front wall in the vicinity of the dash plane, and

wherein the first closed section continuously connects to the second closed section.

2. (*Currently Amended*) A side member according to claim 1, ~~which further comprises~~ comprising a brace member having one end side of which is joined to the front side member and ~~the other another~~ end side joined for joining to the vertical wall of the dash panel.

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3. (*Currently Amended*) A side member according to claim 2, wherein the front side member is ~~formed having~~ and the brace member form a third closed section between each other and is adapted to be positioned in front of the dash panel, and a closed section is also formed between the brace member and the front side member in the vicinity of the dash panel.

4. (*Currently Amended*) A side member ~~according to claim 2, which is a complement of a pair located on either side of a vehicle and extending in a longitudinal direction thereof, and adapted to extend under a dash panel located in a front part of the interior of the vehicle, the side member comprising:~~

a front side member adapted to extend rearwardly, from the front of the vehicle, beyond a dash plane, which extends along a substantially vertical wall of the dash panel;

a rear side member adapted to extend forwardly, from the rear of the vehicle, beyond the dash plane, and having a surface extending in the longitudinal direction of the vehicle and overlapping with and joined to the front side member; and

a brace member having one end side joined to the front side member and another end side for joining to the vertical wall of the dash panel,

wherein the front side member is formed of includes an inner member [[,]] having an upper front wall, a lower front wall, and an front inside front wall, and an outer member having an front outside front wall, and

wherein the brace member is joined joined to the front inside front wall and an upper edge flange, which is provided on the upper edge of a top outside wall extending upward from an upper flange on the outer member of the front side member.

5. (*Currently Amended*) A side member according to claim 1, wherein ~~the front side member is formed of an inner member, having an upper front wall, a lower front wall, and a front inside wall, and an outer member having a front outside wall, and the front end of the rear side member penetrates~~ has a front end portion penetrating an inside space surrounded by the inner member and the outer member.

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6. *(Currently Amended)* A side member according to claim 5, wherein the rear side member further includes a lower member covering the upper member from below, and wherein the front end of the rear side member is formed of a~~includes the~~ bottom wall, a rear the inside rear wall, and a rear the outside rear wall, the bottom wall thereof being joined~~joined~~ to the lower front wall, the rear inside rear wall thereof being joined~~joined~~ to the front inside front wall, and the rear outside rear wall thereof being joined~~joined~~ to the front outside front wall, with part of the lower member positioned between the front side member and the upper member.

7. *(Currently Amended)* A side member ~~according to claim 6, which is a complement of a pair~~ located on either side of a vehicle and extending in a longitudinal direction thereof, and adapted to extend under a dash panel located in a front part of the interior of the vehicle, the side member comprising:

a front side member adapted to extend rearwardly, from the front of the vehicle, beyond a dash plane, which extends along a vertical wall of the dash panel; and

a rear side member adapted to extend forwardly, from the rear of the vehicle, beyond the dash plane and having a surface extending in the longitudinal direction of the vehicle and overlapping with and joined to the front side member,

wherein the front side member includes an inner member having an upper front wall, a lower front wall, and an inside front wall, and an outer member having an outside front wall,

wherein the rear side member has a front end portion penetrating an inside of space surrounded by the inner member and the outer member,

wherein the front end of the rear side member includes a bottom wall, an inside rear wall, and an outside rear wall, the bottom rear wall being joined to the lower front wall, the inside rear wall being joined to the front inside wall, and the outside rear wall being joined to the outside front wall, and

wherein the rear side member ~~comprises~~includes an upper member[[.]] having the bottom wall, ~~therear~~ inside rear wall, and ~~therear~~ outside rear wall, and for defining a closed section in cooperation with the dash panel, and a lower member covering the upper member from below.

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8. *(Original)* A side member according to claim 7, wherein the upper member penetrates the front side member to a position in front of the lower member.

9. *(Original)* A side member according to claim 7, wherein the lower member is provided with a lower upward flange on the outside edge thereof, the front end of the lower upward flange being interposed between the rear end of an inner upward flange on the outside edge of the upper front wall of the inner member and an outer upper flange on the upper side of the front outside wall of the outer member.

10. *(Currently Amended)* A side member according to claim 7, wherein the lower member extends outwardly from the rear outside wall of the upper member, ~~and is jointed for joining~~ to the outside end of the dash panel.

11. *(Currently Amended)* A side member according to claim 9, wherein the upper member has an upper outward flange on the upper edge of the rear outside wall, the front end of the upper outward flange ~~being jointed for joining~~ to a rack portion provided between the lower upward flange and the upper end of a lower outside wall overlapping the rear outside wall.

12. *(Currently Amended)* ~~An side member of an automobile~~[[,]] comprising:

a vehicle body having a dash panel located in an interior front part thereof and a dash plane, which extends along a substantially vertical wall of the dash panel; and

a side member comprising:

a front side member passing under [[a]]~~the dash plane, which extends along a vertical wall of a dash panel~~, from the front of the ~~body of a vehicle~~ body and extending rearward[[,]]; and

a rear side member passing under the dash plane from the rear of the vehicle body and extending forward,

wherein the front side member and the rear side member ~~being jointed~~are joined

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~~together so as to~~with portions of the front and rear side members, overlapping each other in the longitudinal direction of the vehicle,

wherein the front side member includes an inner member having an upper front wall, a lower front wall, and an inside front wall, and an outer member having an outside front wall,

wherein the inner member and the outer member form a first closed section,

wherein the rear side member includes an upper member having a bottom wall, an inside rear wall, and an outside rear wall,

wherein the upper member forms a second closed section with the dash panel,

wherein the bottom wall is joined to the lower front wall, the inside rear wall is joined to the inside front wall, and the outside rear wall is joined to the outside front wall in the vicinity of the dash plane, and

wherein the first closed section continuously connects to the second closed section.

13. (New) A side member according to claim 3, wherein the third closed section is arranged above the first closed section.

14. (New) An automobile according to claim 12, wherein:

the rear side member further includes a lower member positioned below the upper member, and has a front end portion including the bottom wall, the inside rear wall, and outside rear wall,

the front end portion of the rear side member penetrates an inside space surrounded by the inner member and the outer member, and

the bottom wall is joined to the lower front wall, the inside rear wall is joined to the inside front wall, and the outside rear wall is joined to the outside front wall, with part of the lower member positioned between the front side member and the rear side member.